WHITTIER/LONG BEACH- In an effort to ensure the environmental integrity of road improvement projects in California, Congresswoman Linda T. Sánchez presented a combine $1.8 million to the cities of Long Beach and Whittier today. Sánchez secured the federal funds in the $286 million federal transportation bill, TEA-LU, which was signed into law on August 10th. The bill primarily funds transportation projects such as more freeway lanes and road improvement projects. However, Congresswoman Linda Sánchez was able to secure funds for innovative environmental enhancements to local road improvement projects, two of which are in Long Beach and Whittier. Congresswoman Sánchez was joined by Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill, Long Beach City Councilman Val Lerch, Whittier City Councilmembers, and officials from CalTrans, Los Angeles County Department of Public Works, Los Angeles and San Gabriel Rivers Watershed Council and the Rivers and Mountains Conservancy to unveil the plans for the environmentally conscious road projects.

"I am very pleased to have been able to secure funding for these environmentally sound road improvement projects," said Congresswoman Sánchez. "These projects are the first one of their kind in California. I hope that other localities catch onto this environmentally friendly method of road construction and retrofitting in urban areas to enhance our local environment," added Sánchez.

In particular, the Long Beach project will receive $480,000 to improve Paramount Boulevard, which will include the installation of environmental features such as "bio-retention tree wells*" that receive stormwater from the gutter and also naturally absorb and clean the street water instead of allowing it to flow untreated into storm drains and to our local beaches and ocean.

The Whittier project will receive $1.36 million to improve Whittier Boulevard, which will include the construction of a mile-long "bio-swale**" with natural landscaping along the roadway that will allow stormwater from the street gutter to flow into the bio-swale and be naturally absorbed and cleaned, rather than sending untreated storm water to our local beaches and oceans.

"It is really the small forward thinking projects like this, that when added up, will really make an impact in saving our environment," concluded Sánchez.

Overall, Congresswoman Sánchez secured $12.8 million in federal funding through TEA-LU for transportation projects in the 39th Congressional District.

*Bioretention removes storm water pollutants through physical and biological processes, including adsorption, filtration, plant uptake, microbial activity, decomposition, sedimentation and volatilization. Bioretention areas can provide excellent pollutant removal and recharge for the "first flush" of stormwater runoff. Properly designed cells remove suspended solids, metals, and nutrients, and can infiltrate an inch or more of rainfall.

**A bio-swale is a type of stormwater filtration system. It is a shallow depression created in the earth to accept and convey stormwater runoff. A bioswale uses natural means, including vegetation and soil, to treat stormwater by filtering out contaminants being conveyed in the water.